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USAID/Senegal launches program to boost economic growth

USAID/Senegal has launched a program to boost trade to accelerate economic growth and increase competitiveness in the West African country. The five-year program includes providing business development services to promote increased trade and export competitiveness, especially as it relates to the Africa Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA), public-private partnerships that attract private investment for efficient delivery of public goods or services, public policy reforms to improve Senegal's business environment, and support for implementing democratic and economic reforms already undertaken by the Government of Senegal.

"Through this program, we are hoping to support efforts of the government to remove obstacles to economic growth," said U.S. Ambassador to Senegal, Janice L. Jacobs.

The Ambassador, who heads the Private Sector Working Group of donors, noted that the United States and other donors "are ready to work with Senegal on its stated goal of becoming an emerging economy. This requires a concerted and coordinated effort to put in place reforms already identified to stimulate the development of the private sector and



Seed buyers and sellers come together at Touba Toul, near Senegal's central town of Thiès, on May 12 for a seed fair financed by USAID. Many of the farmers and herders lost their livelihoods when swarms of voracious desert locusts invaded their peanut and millet fields in late 2004. Many of these families have not turned a profit from their land since the infestation. At the fair, one of 38 to be organized in Senegal and Mauritania before the end of next year, they received vouchers worth \$15 each, enabling them to buy about 15 kilograms of seeds.



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U.S. Ambassador Janice L. Jacobs (second from left) and Senegal's Minister of Economy and Finance, Abdoulaye Diop (second from right), officially launch USAID/Senegal's economic growth program on May 10. Also pictured are Olivier Carduner, Director of USAID/Senegal (left), and Regina Brown, the program's Chief of Party (right).

allow the country to benefit fully from donor contributions."

According to USAID/Senegal Director, Olivier Carduner, among the country's challenges are to diversify and increase the volume of exports, which along with increased investments will "be the engine of economic growth."

Senegal's Minister of Economy and Finance, Abdoulaye Diop, said USAID's economic growth program "aligns itself perfectly with national plans for growth, promotion of small and medium enterprises and development of the private sector."

Phoenix system online in Senegal

On March 14, USAID/Senegal went live in the first phase of the Africa Deployment for "Phoenix," the Agency's new financial management system. Over the past two months the team has been getting comfortable and adjusting to Phoenix.

"It's amazing how literally overnight everything can change," said Clinton White, USAID/Senegal Controller. "It has been a challenge but everyone has embraced it with optimism," he said, adding that the team has adapted quickly as it continues to learn.

Some of the improvements to the Mission include: the implementation of a web-based accounting system with robust features, functions and capabilities that never existed under the old accounting system; a "real time" recording of transactions, which means all figures are up to date; and the ability to interface with other department programs to streamline processes and improve efficiency.

New community health approach could save 30,000 lives a year

A pilot activity funded by USAID, the World Health Organization (WHO), UNICEF, and Pfizer could save the lives of over 30,000 small children in Senegal alone each year. During a study conducted in the regions of Kédougou, Khombole, Thiadiaye and Vélingara, medical experts trained community health workers to properly diagnose and treat children under five years of age who suffer from pneumonia and other acute respiratory diseases.

An evaluation of the study showed that a well trained, supervised and adequately equipped community health worker at a health hut could correctly diagnose and treat young patients. Virtually all of them in the study did so.



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Ngor Dione, right, a community health worker in the village of Kouloulouk Mbada in Senegal's Thiadiaye district, discusses new treatment of pneumonia and other acute respiratory infections. With training provided by USAID and other partners, villagers receive prescriptions for antibiotics by community health workers without having to travel long distances.

On March 15, health representatives from several West African countries attended a conference in Senegal's capital, Dakar, to learn more about this community approach to health care. At the ceremony, Pfizer, USAID, WHO, and UNICEF launched a partnership to fund the expansion of the training and treatment activity throughout Senegal.



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Nogoye Dione, right, a birth assistant in Kouloulouk Mbada, has received training in mother and infant care through activities financed by USAID.

More middle schools for Senegal



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U.S. Ambassador to Senegal, Janice Jacobs (second from right) and USAID/Senegal Director Olivier Carduner (center) visit the island of Bassoul to inaugurate a middle school, a first for the remote community. With USAID funding, implementing partners have built or expanded 30 middle schools since 2004.



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Girls dance at a ceremony launching a middle school on the island of Bassoul.



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The only way to Bassoul is by pirogue through Senegal's pristine mangroves.